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"Nothing is more clearly written in the Book of Destiny, than the Emancipation of the Blacks; and it is equally certain that the two races will never live in a state of equal freedom under the same government, so insurmountable are the barriers which nature, habit and opinion have established between them." JEFFERSON.

FIFTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT

Of the Board of Managers of the Maryland State Colonization Society.

It has been the custom of the Board to commence their Annual Report with an announcement of the sailing of the last expedition to the Colony at Cape Palmas; and they do so on this occasion with peculiar satisfaction, inasmuch as they are able to state, that, the long-talked-of Liberia Packet was completed in time to convey the emigrants to Africa, and sailed from Baltimore on the third of December last.

At the date of the last Annual Report, the political relations of the United States and Great Britain, in regard to the Oregon question, were such as to prevent the active operations of the Company that had been organized under the charter obtained from the State of Maryland, for the purpose of carrying on a trade between the waters of the Chesapeake bay and the coast of Africa, and transporting those who might be disposed to emigrate to the latter. As soon, however, as public affairs assumed a settled aspect, the Company proceeded to contract for a suitable vessel, and a barque of three hundred and thirty-one tons, of the clipper model, was built for them by Mr. Langley B. Culley, of Baltimore. She was launched early in November, 1846, and was called the Liberia Packet. Her internal arrangements had especial reference to the carriage of passengers, and without entering into a detailed account of them, it is sufficient to say, that, they are eminently calculated to ensure the comfort, health and safety of the emigrants on the voyage; that instead of the close, confined and crowded steerage of the emigrant ship from Europe, the cabin of the Liberia Packet is roomy, and thoroughly ventilated, and provided with permanent and comfortable berths and convenient lockers; and that its accommodations are fully equal to those of many merchant vessels for cabin passengers.

As has been stated in the last Report, the Liberia Packet is the property of a joint stock company, many of whose members are persons of colour, and all the stock owned by others is held on condition that it shall be disposed of at cost and interest, when applied for by coloured persons. The State Society is a stockholder to the amount heretofore subscribed specially to the building of a packet. On her first voyage out, in addition to the freight and

emigrants offered by the Colonization societies, quite a number of cabin passengers and a considerable amount of freight was obtained from other sources, and there is every reason to believe that in a pecuniary point of view, the Liberia Packet will prove a profitable investment to the stockholders. In a moral point of view, the advantages to be derived from her regular trips between this country and Africa cannot be too highly appreciated; and the Board are happy to be able to say, that, to some extent, they have already been realized, in the greater interest in the cause, that has been created on both sides of the Atlantic, by the permanence that thus seems to have been given to the intercourse between them. The Packet brought to Baltimore the news of her arrival at the Colony on her return to this port on the 6th of April last, having proved herself to possess all the best qualities of a fast sailing and most comfortable craft.

The advices from the Colony up to the time of the sailing of the Packet were of the most gratifying character, as had been, indeed, all those received during the current year; and in January, the date of the last advices, the emigrants were contented and thriving—the business of the place was on the increase—employment was readily obtained by all who were willing to work, and extended journeys had been made into the interior, opening new avenues for trade in the one direction, and for the extension, in the other, of the light and blessings of Christianity and civilization. Cases of discontent were rare, and affairs generally seemed to be as prosperous, and as likely to continue so, as the best and warmest friends of Colonization could reasonably desire. The Board are well aware how easy it is to round periods on one side of an ocean, in regard to affairs on the other, and how often the wish is the father to the thought in reports like the present; and they are, therefore, guarded in the statements that they make, saying nothing which they do not believe to be fully borne out by the testimony, not of their agent only, but by the evidence of impartial visitors, who look at the Colony without any of the bias that may be imputed to avowed Colonizationists. The Board do not pretend to say that Cape Palmas is "the happy valley"—but they do say, that its condition and prospects fully equal the most sanguine anticipations of its friends and are such as to excite the liveliest satisfaction among all who feel an interest in the developement of the talents and energies of that large portion of the human family, which, it has been the fashion among many, to look upon as incapable of political self-government, or high intellectual accomplishments.

In the last Annual Report the Board stated, that they had sent to the Colony the model of a schooner of fifty tons, with such materials and naval stores as were necessary to enable her to be built at Cape Palmas; and also, that they had secured the services of a journeyman ship carpenter, an intelligent free man of colour, to superintend her construction. They are now glad to be able to state that the schooner has been launched, and is actively engaged in the service of the Colony. All the anticipations of the Board in having the schooner built at the Colony have been realized. A most admirable model has been furnished, and a commencement made in ship building, which, though upon a small scale, promises already to produce most gratifying results. Bolen, the carpenter who built the schooner, has returned to the United States,

and is now preparing to go back to the Colony to open a regular ship yard on his own account. He has proved himself, in every respect, competent to the undertaking, and the Board entertain no doubt of his success in it. From all that is said, there is some reason to think that the arrival of a good model, to be built from in Africa, did not take place before it was required for the benefit of the Colonial ship yards.

A part of the last Annual Report was occupied with the subject of the tariff; and the Board stated that they had finally met the views of the colonists on the subject, and that the law had gone into operation. It will be remembered, that the tariff as settled at last, was a duty of 5 per cent. *ad valorem*, on all articles imported into the Colony—taking the cost in the port whence they were shipped as the standard. In the execution of this law, however, difficulties very soon arose; importers refused to show their invoices, and as it was difficult to get at the value of articles imported in any other way, the *ad valorem* duties soon became next to impossible to collect, and the tariff promised to become a dead letter. The Governor, who explained to the Board, ably and satisfactorily, the obstables presented to the execution of the law, earnestly asked for specific duties; and after full consideration of the subject, the Board determined to change the tariff from an *ad valorem* one, to one levying specific duties.

The Liberia Packet took out the ordinance that had been prepared for this purpose, and although sufficient time had not elapsed to enable Governor Russwurm to speak of its operation, yet in his despatches to the Board, he considers it as having removed the only difficulty in the way of making the tariff not only effective, but popular.

Among the passengers that left Baltimore in the Packet last fall, was Dr. Dempsey Fletcher, who, as was mentioned in a former Report, had been brought from the Colony with a view to his being educated as a Physician in this country, and then returning to Cape Palmas. This was done; and having received a diploma from the Medical School of Dartmouth College, Dr. Fletcher has gone back to Africa, with every prospect of becoming a most useful person there. His presence enabled Dr. McGill, the Colonial Physician, whom the Board have had occasion so often to mention in terms of high praise, to visit the United States; and the Board would not do justice to him, nor to their feelings towards him, did they not on this occasion, express the satisfaction with which they greeted one to whose valuable services they had been so much indebted. The high and honorable reputation, which as a medical man, he enjoys on the Coast of Africa, is but a just tribute to his talents and acquirements.

Mrs. Russwurm, the wife of Governor Russwurm, and the sister of Dr. McGill, also returned to the United States on a visit in the Liberia Packet, bringing with her one of her children; and in mentioning her return, the Board cannot omit the expression of the uniform satisfaction, which they have had, during the long period of ten years, with her husband as their Agent and Governor of Maryland in Liberia. The first colored man employed at the head of a Colony from this country, Governor Russwurm had no easy duty to perform in illustrating by his conduct his fitness for his position. This he did so satisfactorily, that there is not a white man now

in an agency on the coast. The relations of the Board with him have thus far been of unmingled kindness.

The Board are gratified in being able to say, that the Colony has been at peace with the Nations around it, and that the time has long since past when there could be any apprehension of difficulties with them. The course pursued universally has been one of conciliation.

Since the date of the last Annual Report, large additions have been made to the territory of the Colony, and the Board received by the Liberia Packet copies of deeds from the Kings of Tabou, Tahoe, Grand Bereby, Little Bereby and Bassa. By these deeds, the natives, kings and their people, place themselves under the jurisdiction of the Society's Agent, in all matters of general concern, and agree to abide by his decision in all differences between themselves. The territory thus added to the Colony is large and of great value.

The important duties of the Governor in the increasing business of the Colony, no longer permit him to discharge as efficiently as he desires the office of Chief Justice, and the Board contemplate the establishment of an independent officer to preside over the courts. The system which was well adapted to the early period of the Colony, has been found not so well suited to its more advanced condition.

The Board have had to regret the death, since the last Annual Report, of two valuable friends of the cause of Colonization. Mr. Wm. Morris, long a member of this Board, and one who took the liveliest interest in every thing relating to Africa; and Miss Margaret Mercer, whose name has long enjoyed a most honorable distinction in connection with every thing tending to the improvement and happiness of her fellow-beings. To the warmest feelings and the most delicate refinement, she added talents of the highest order, and an energy that never faltered in the pursuit of the noble objects to which she devoted her existence. Without the bodily strength that ordinarily gives confidence to exertion—a woman, and with less too than a woman's usual health, her life was an illustration of the favour with which the Almighty blesses the high purposes even of the weakest hands; and in the brief notice which is thus taken of Miss Mercer, the Board feel that it is a recommendation to the cause in which they are engaged, that one, so good and true as she was, should have been among its most zealous and untiring friends.

With regard to the prospects of Colonization, looking to its great and ultimate objects, the Board have every reason to be satisfied. As they have said again and again, they rely on time, and the creation of a commercial intercourse with Africa, combined with circumstances on this side of the Atlantic, to produce a voluntary emigration that shall finally separate the two races which are here mingled in contact, with no prospect of being ever incorporated as one people. It would be idle now to reiterate the arguments upon which this view of Colonization rests. Year after year proves that it is the only true one. The great events of the age, which do not become conspicuous until time enough has elapsed to permit their separation from the minor matters that surrounded them at their occurrence, all tend to this end, or have a bearing upon it. The settlement of the North-Eastern boundary question, under a treaty, in the preparation of which, all questions connected with slavery in this country, seem to have been studiously avoided, resulted, nevertheless, in the establishment of

a fleet on the Coast of Africa, which has almost brought the colonies on the coast to be our next door neighbours, and is a feature in the agreement between the two great nations, which although evidently looked upon as a minor one by their negotiators, will nevertheless be remembered from its inestimable results, long after the questions of boundary, which threatened war between England and America, shall have been forgotten. The Ashburton treaty will be a treaty which history will hereafter regard as that, which commenced the bridge of boats on which the colored people of the United States passed from oppression into true liberty. Again, while the famine in Ireland, and indeed, in other countries of Europe, calls for our sympathies, it is to be regarded not merely as an event to be deplored on account of the present sufferings of those whom it afflicts, but as an Agent in the great scheme which the Board advocate,—one of the great events which constitute the means for bringing about results to which the powers of man were wholly incompetent. The emigration that it will cause to this country, cannot fail to have its effect in increasing that competition for employment, which the Board have always regarded as inevitable, sooner or later, and in bringing about a state of things which the free coloured man will at last be obliged to admit, promises no amelioration, so far as he is concerned, and leaves him, as was said some years since by the Colonization Convention held in Baltimore, no alternative, but emigration. The Board deem it unnecessary to enlarge on these topics; they dwell on them with no satisfaction: but they look upon existing circumstances as the result of causes beyond their control; and they are more than ever anxious to exert themselves in the cause of Colonization—looking to it as the only means that has been or can be devised by man to meet the events now approaching with resistless power.

By order of the Board,

JNO. H. B. LATROBE, *President.*

BALTIMORE, *May 15th*, 1847.

TO THE REV. CLERGY IN THE STATE OF MARYLAND:

Reverend Sir—It has, for many years past, been the custom to connect the celebration of the 4th of July with the cause of colonization, by taking up collections in its behalf on the first Sunday before or after this time of national rejoicing. As colonization, apart from all its political results, is eminently an agency in the great work of christian missions, there seems a peculiar fitness in the recognition that it has thus been in the habit of receiving in the churches throughout the land; and no time for this could be more appropriate, surely, than that at which, called on to acknowledge the blessings of a free goverment ourselves, our hearts would naturally dispose us to aid the effort which was making to impart the same in Africa, to those who, in America, were freemen in name only.

In the present year, Reverend Sir, the fourth of July falls on Sunday; and the object of this communication is not so much to impress upon you the claims of colonization, as to remind you of the custom above referred to, and to beg, most respectfully, that on this occasion it may be observed in the congregation under your charge. I well know how many calls for

charity are made through the pulpit—calls for objects which may be thought at first sight nearer home than that which I present; but I feel sure that, when you recollect, that along with colonization goes the minister of Christ, with the bible in his hand, and that there follows after all that is estimable and admirable of humanity—and that there are many, very many, in Africa, who look with interest to the collections now solicited—I feel sure, Rev. Sir, that when you bear this in mind, the request of the society will not be disregarded.

I am, with the highest respect, your friend and servant,

JNO. H. B. LATROBE, *Pres. Md State Col. Soc.*

NOTE.—Collections may be forwarded to Dr. James Hall, General Agent of the Maryland State Col. Soc., Colonization Rooms, Baltimore.

DESPATCHES FROM LIBERIA.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, *Monrovia, Jan.* 29, 1847.

Sir:—By the good barque "Liberia Packet," which arrived in our harbor on the evening of the 6th inst., thirty-two days from the capes of Virginia, with emigrants and stores for this place and Cape Palmas—I had the honor of receiving your favor of the 1st ultimo, covering roll of emigrants, &c. &c.

As directed by you, I have located the emigrants for this part of Liberia —except one young man sent out by Mr. Atkinson of Virginia, who desired him to locate at Millsburg with a family sent to the colony by his sister several year ago—at Bexley, in charge of Dr. Smith, who accompanied them down, and who will give them every attention in his power I have also employed Mr. Benson to take charge of their stores, to look after their welfare, and to attend to the managing of their affairs during the six months they are to remain under the care of the Society.

The arrival of the Packet with Dr. Lugenbeel and the passengers on board was hailed with great satisfaction.

She is indeed a first rate vessel, in every respect well fitted for the accommodation of passengers. And Dr. Hall is entitled to much praise for the admirable manner in which he has arranged the emigrant apartment; it possesses, as far as I am competent of judging, every convenience necessary to health and comfort

The people here generally are pleased with the vessel, and I believe, with the enterprise—all with whom I have conversed on the subject express great confidence in her success. If properly managed she will no doubt do a good business, and be profitable to her owners. I understand some stock will be taken here, and at Grand Bassa—what amount I have not been able to ascertain. It is my intention to take a few shares if I can so arrange my money matters; to-morrow I will write you further on the subject.

Enclosed you will receive copies of a communication from Captain Murray, of her Majesty's sloop "Favorite," and my reply, respecting the light in which England regards the sovereignty of these colonies, &c. &c. Captain Murray was very civil, and expressed himself deeply interested in the prosperity of the colony.

He suggested the propriety of the people of Liberia, in the event of a change of their relations with the society—proposing a commercial treaty

with Great Britain, which he thinks would bring about a speedy recognition of the independence of Liberia by his Government.

Commodore Read arriving here just at the time of this correspondence, I communicated to him its character and requested his opinion in regard to certain principles of common international law laid down by Captain Murray, respecting the future extension of our territory. Accompanying I send you a copy of the Commodore's reply, containing his opinion in regard to the controverted points.

I understand he has written a strong letter to the Secretary of the Navy, respecting foreign interference with these colonies, their commerce, resources, &c., &c., and has recommended them to the favorable notice of his Government.

Before leaving for Cabenda, Commodore Read was good enough to order Captain Pope, of the U. S. Brig "Dolphin," to cruise on this part of the coast, to watch the movements of the slavers at Gallenas, and to render every assistance to the colonies, consistent with his duty as an American naval officer. I hoped to take advantage of the Dolphin's cruise on the Liberia coast, to visit our leeward settlements, and to negotiate with the natives for certain intermediate points of territory. In this, however, I have been disappointed. Immediately on receiving the order, Captain Pope proceeded on a short cruise to leeward, showing himself off New Cess, Tradetown, &c., &c. In a few days, however, he received intelligence of the arrival of an American barque at Cape Mount, under rather suspicious circumstances. He felt it his duty to proceed immediately to that place to watch her movements, where he has remained ever since, and where he will probably remain—as the objects of the vessel referred to cannot be satisfactorily ascertained—until he finds it necessary to proceed to Porto Praya to fill up his stores. I sincerely hope that Captain Pope may not be driven to that necessity, for should he leave, and if, indeed, it be the object of the vessel to take slaves, she will have a fine opportunity during his absence—so much for not having a supply of naval stores at this place.

By the minutes of the council, herewith transmitted, you will perceive that a convention has been ordered to meet in this town on the first Monday in July next, for the purpose of forming a constitution for the government of Liberia. The new government will probably go into operation about the first of next year.

The subject of independence was elaborately discussed before the Legislature at the commencement of the session:—fears were entertained that we were going to have rather a stormy time. After the first two or three days, however, members began to understand each other, and the business of the session progressed, and measures respecting the independence of Liberia, were adopted with great unanimity.

I send you copies of deeds for three tracts of country purchased from the natives in December last, being portions of the territories known as Timboo and Manna, comprising about fifteen miles of sea coast, and running back into the interior about fifty miles.

The sloop "Economy," which vessel I purchased a month or two ago on account of the Society, for $1,500—left here on the 25th inst., with commissioners and a suitable assortment of merchandize to continue our purchases of territory along the coast. I hope by the next opportunity to be able to give you a good account of our doings, notwithstanding the increased opposition of foreign traders and their efforts to alienate the affections of the natives, and to break off our negotiations with them for territory. I find that their friendship is not diminished, and that many of them are still disposed to cede to us their territories, and incorporate themselves with the

colonists. I found it impossible to prosecute successfully our operations along the coast, without the aid of a suitable vessel—and to charter one for the length of time we should require her services would be exceedingly expensive. I therefore concluded to purchase the "Economy" for the occasion; and when we shall have finished our negotiations to sell her to some of our traders, thereby saving an expense of several hundred dollars, as we hope to obtain for her nearly the amount she cost us originally, independent of her services.

You will regret to learn, that there has been an unprecedented flood in the Sinou river, during the past rainy season, which has caused much damage to the crops of natives and colonists settled upon its banks. The settlement of Reedsville, situated four miles up the river, was completely inundated, and the farms for two miles around were four feet under water. The natives were gathered at numerous points on both sides of the river, gazing in dismay upon the angry flood of waters, which far exceeded in fearfulness any thing they had ever before beheld. I am happy to inform you, though there were several narrow escapes, that no lives were lost. It is feared, however, that the great damage the crops sustained will produce during the present season, considerable suffering in that part of the colony. Indeed, applications have already been made to me for assistance, and I regret exceedingly that I have not been able to render them that assistance which their situation seems to demand. I shall however, give them all the aid in my power. I have determined to remove the settlement of Reedsville to a more elevated site about two miles east of the one it now occupies, and have given Mr. Murray directions accordingly—which he will carry into effect immediately. The Rexes are sadly disappointed in not receiving by the Packet a portion, at least, of the amount due them from their late master's estate. It is indeed surprising, why the court withholds the amount from them.

Have you ascertained from Mr. McLane since his return to the U. S., whether the documents respecting the seizure of the "John Seys" from the authorities of this place, forwarded to the British Government under cover to him, were ever received and delivered.

Willis Helm is very much mortified and annoyed at the manner in which he has been duped, with respect to certain statements contained in a letter sent by him to his friend in Virginia. Not being able to write himself, he procured the assistance of a friend (a foreigner he says,) to write for him, but he declares that he never authorized the erroneous statements in question, and intends to have them corrected.

I believe he intends writing to you by this conveyance, detailing some curious facts connected with the authorship of that letter.

Thinking that a larger number of emigrants than those by the Packet would probably arrive in the vessel from New Orleans, to sail about the 20th December for the Kentucky settlement—it was thought advisable that Dr. Lugenbeel should remain to take charge of them.

I this moment received a note from Captain Pope, of the U. S. Brig Dolphin, off Cape Mount, in which he says, "Capt. Canot says he is desirous to sell Cape Mount—and will let the colony have it for five thousand dollars less than he offered it to the English." He declares it to be his determination to quit this part of the country: where he intends going I know not, but conjecture.

I am confident an effort will be made to ship the slaves at the Gallenas. I have strong suspicions, &c., &c.; and I regret exceedingly, that I am not in a faster sailing vessel than the "Dolphin." I see that the President in his message to Congress, recommends the employment of one or more

steamers on foreign stations. A steamer, attached to the African squadron, would no doubt render incalculable service, could be employed to greater advantage than on any other coast.

I am, sir, respectfully, your obd't servant,

Rev. W. McLain, J. J. Roberts.

Secretary Am. Col. Society, Washington City, U. S. A.

GOV. ROBERTS' MESSAGE.

To the Honorable, the Members of the Legislature:

Gentlemen:—Another year is come around; and it is with peculiar satisfaction I meet the ninth session of the Legislature of Liberia.—Coming from all parts of the Commonwealth, at this critical and interesting period, it is presumed, gentlemen, that you are fully possessed of the sentiments and wishes of your constituents; and are prepared to act promptly in all questions which may be submitted to your consideration; and no doubt will be enabled to give such a direction to public affairs as the wisdom and patriotism of your constituents will approve and support.

On our present meeting, it is my first duty to invite your attention to the providential favors which these colonies have experienced during the past year, in the unusual degree of health dispensed to the inhabitants, in the rich abundance with which the earth has rewarded the labors of the husbandman, and in the success which has attended the efforts of our merchants and traders.

In the successful cultivation of other branches of industry, and in the progress of general improvement, everywhere manifest, favorable to the national prosperity, there is just occasion also for our mutual congratulations and thankfulness.

I have the satisfaction of informing you that the market-house in this town has been completed: and in conformity with the sixth section of an act entitled "An act appropriating money for building a market-house in the town of Monrovia," which provides, "That when said market-house shall have been completed, it shall be leased to the corporation of Monrovia, for an annual rent, to be agreed upon by persons appointed by the Governor and the corporation for that purpose,"—Messrs. James Brown and H. Teage were appointed on the part of the Commonwealth, and Messrs. D. B. Brown and James B. McGill on the part of the corporation. I lay before you the award of those gentlemen and the agreement of the corporate authorities. By the latter you will perceive that the corporation authorities bind themselves to pay into the Treasury of the Commonwealth annually, certain sums, until the amount expended in erecting the building.

The report of the Canal Commissioners has not yet been received.—I understand, however, it is in a forward state of preparation, and will be laid before you at an early day.

Accounts of the receipts and expenditures of the last year, will, as usual, be laid before you. I am happy to be able to inform you that the state of our finances continues to fulfil our expectations. Full returns of officers in the counties of Grand Bassa and Sinoe, have not yet been received. It is ascertained, however, that the revenue received during the last year exceeds by a small amount that of the preceding; and it may reasonably be expected, that the receipts of the ensuing year, with the sum now in the Treasury, will be sufficient to defray the current demand of the year, and meet any expense which may be incurred, should the Legislature adopt

measures to that effect, in carrying out the wishes of the people in regard to forming a new government.

With respect to the subject of Independence I have the honor to inform you, that in compliance with the desire of the Legislature as expressed in their resolution of the 15th of July last, requesting the executive to call the attention of the people of these Colonies to certain recommendations expressed in a set of resolutions, adopted by the Board of Directors of the American Colonization Society, at their annual meeting in January last, touching the independence of Liberia, I issued a proclamation, expressive of the desire of the Legislature, and calling on the people of this Commonwealth, to determine, through the ballot-box, what disposition should be made of the resolutions, or whether the recommendation therein submitted should be adopted or not. I lay before you the result of the vote taken on the question, in all the towns and villages of the Commonwealth, on the 27th day of November last.

You will perceive that the people by a small majority, however, have decided in favor of adopting the suggestions of the Board of Directors, in regard to a change of our relations with the Society: and have expressed a desire that a Convention be called to draft a constitution for the new government, and that measures be adopted to carry the same into effect as soon as practicable.

I regret exceedingly to find by official returns, that no more than two-thirds of the legal voters of the Commonwealth attended the polls to record their opinion respecting this highly important question.

Why so many of our fellow citizens absented themselves, and declined giving a public expression of their sentiments respecting the question submitted to their consideration, is unknown to me. It is, nevertheless, a question of vital importance to the people of Liberia. One that should interest, deeply interest, every citizen of this Commonwealth.

Since this question was first mooted, I have been watching with much concern, the progress of public opinion in regard to it: and have frequently been astonished at the instability of the public mind and the manifest inconsistency of some of the leading men of our community.

In tracing the cause of this fickleness, I have been pained to find that many of our less informed fellow citizens, have been egregiously deceived in regard to the purport of a communication addressed to the Board of Directors of the American Colonization Society, by a committee of the Legislature of 1845, respecting the light in which the sovereignty of these colonies is held by the government of Great Britain.

It is asserted, I understand, that the Legislature of 1845, not having the authority of the people for the purpose, of course, communicated with the Board of Directors of the American Colonization Society, informing them it was the wish of the people of these colonies, that their political relations with the Society should be immediately changed; and that Liberia be declared an Independent State. And that the Legislature contemplated forming a new government without asking the consent of the people.

As preposterous and foolish, to say the least of them, as these accusations are, they have had a baneful effect upon the minds of some of our people. And, I have no doubt, in a great degree, prevented that unanimity of action so desirable on the adoption of any great and important measure.

I believe it was not the intention of the members of that Legislature to convey the idea by their communication to the Board of Directors, that a vote of the people had been taken on the question of independence, and that they were recommending the measure on their authority.—And how any rational man could entertain the idea, that the Legislature contemplated

changing the relations of these colonies, and forming a new government without the authority of the people, I cannot conceive. I venture to assert, that not a single member of that Legislature, would tolerate the doctrine that the inhabitants at large should not exercise that right, a right which God has given them in common with all men, to judge whether it be consistent with their interests or not to change their political relations, or to accept or reject a constitution, framed for the state of which they are members.

This is the birthright of every citizen to whatever state he may belong. There he is, or ought to be, by indefeasible right, a co-legislator with all the other members of that community. And while it is acknowledged that every individual in a community is not qualified for assisting in the framing of a constitution; it is equally evident that share of common sense, which the Almighty has so bountifully distributed among mankind in general, is sufficient to quicken every one's feelings, and enable him to judge rightly what degree of safety, and what advantages he is likely to enjoy, or be deprived of, under any constitution proposed to him.

The diversity of opinions and judgments which always takes place on a new measure, the unaccountable proneness of some men to censure every thing not their own, and fretfulness of others at not being consulted on all public matters, are every-day occurrences in long established, intelligent, and well regulated communities; therefore are not so wonderful in Liberia.

I presume, gentlemen, that you will dispose of this question of independence according to the wishes of the people as expressed by the vote of the 27th of November last.—If so, you will, of course, determine upon the number of which the Convention for framing a new Constitution shall be composed, the manner in which they shall be elected, the time of their meeting, &c., &c.

I am aware that objections are urged against this course. It is insisted, on the grounds that no more than two-thirds of the male inhabitants attended the polls to signify their wishes with respect to the question, and that the majority in favor of the measure being so small, that the Legislature should decline calling a Convention, or adopting further measures in the premises.

For my own part, I can see but one course for the Legislature to pursue. With respect to those of our fellow citizens, who declined attending the polls, I have only to remind you, that no person was excluded from voting but those who chose to exclude themselves; and in that case, I hold, that they either show themselves unworthy of the privileges of a citizen, or confiding in the judgment of others, signified their consent to the measure proposed. And while it is deeply to be regretted that greater unanimity does not exist with respect to this important question, we can but remember the indisputable maxim, "The will of the people is the law of the land," and that government is, or ought to be, instituted for their benefit; and of all the various modes and forms of government, that is best, which is capable of producing the greatest degree of happiness and safety, and that when any government should be found inadequate or contrary to these purposes, the majority, however small that majority may be, has an indubitable, unalienable and indefeasible right, to reform, alter or abolish it, in such a manner as shall be judged most conducive to the public weal. Such changes, however, are always dangerous, and should never be made, except under the firm conviction, that they are necessary for the benefit, protection and security of the people in general.

Now, gentlemen, this perplexing question is in your hands, and as the representatives and guardians of the rights and interests of the people of

these colonies, I beg to remind you of the great responsibility which rests upon you. It is your duty to watch cautiously over every occurrence that can possibly tend to obstruct the fair channel of our happiness. And I am fully persuaded that the prosperity and happiness of the people of these colonies depend, under God, on the firm union of their inhabitants. Generations yet to come, may owe their freedom and happiness to the result of your deliberations on the important subject now submitted to your consideration. A single false step at this critical crisis may ruin, irreparably ruin, our hopes of future success. Upon you then depends the political happiness or wretchedness of the people of Liberia. May I therefore entreat you to weigh and consider well the part you are called to act in this important matter, and that you will not suffer yourselves to be betrayed into any feelings unbecoming the dignity of your station, and the present critical situation of our affairs. Let us substitute calmness for passion, confidence for suspicion, and no doubt we shall soon agree as to the course proper to be pursued on this occasion of your meeting.

In assuming the whole responsibility of conducting the affairs of this government, it is impossible to conceal from ourselves or the world the many disadvantages and embarrassments, we must necessarily labor under for some years. The numerical strength of the colony is comparatively small, nor can we boast of great intelligence, experience or wealth. Indeed when these are considered, it is no matter of surprise that so many of our fellow citizens are exceedingly fearful as to the results of this new organization. The question, "Has the time arrived for this important change," naturally forces itself on the mind of every reflecting citizen.

A majority of the people, however, have decided in the affirmative, which opinion is sustained by the unanimous vote of the Board of Directors of the American Colonization Society. In their opinion it is the only course that will or can relieve us from the embarrassments we labor under, with respect to the encroachments of foreigners, and the objections urged by Great Britain in regard to our sovereignty.

I sincerely hope, and believe, gentlemen, that you will be sustained by your fellow citizens in whatever measures you may adopt respecting this question, and that the reputation of the people of Liberia, for order and good government, will not be diminished by our future conduct, that there will be no discord among us, that all differences of small moment will be entirely laid aside, and that the only strife among citizens, will be who shall do most to serve and to save an oppressed and injured race.

I feel particular satisfaction in being able to announce to you, that nothing has occurred during the past year, to disturb the friendly relations subsisting between this government and the surrounding native tribes. Indeed, our amity with them appears to have been more firmly established. I am also happy to state, that the continued efforts to introduce among them the Christain religion, and habits of civilization, have not been without success. They are unquestionably becoming every year more and more sensible of the superiority of civilized life over the barbarous customs of their fathers; and many of them are beginning to engage pretty extensively in the pursuits of agriculture and household manufacture. They are becoming convinced of the precarious resources of the slave trade, and of the sufferings to which many of them are frequently reduced by the wars and wants of savage life, and find it to their interests to dispose of their territories to this government, and ceding it to the political control and jurisdiction over all persons and property therein; incorporating themselves with us, forming an integral part of this Commonwealth.

Since the last annual meeting of this Legislature, another important acquisition of territory has been made. In February last, the natives oc-

cupying the lands lying between Blue Barra and Grand Cess, the territory of Settra Kroo, comprising about six miles of sea coast excepted, ceded to this government, including the rights of sovereignty, their entire territories: also two tribes farther south, occupying the territory known as Tassoo and Baffoo Bay; reserving for their members only what is sufficient to maintain them in an agricultural way. A few days ago, General Lewis, commissioned on the part of this government, succeeded in purchasing about fifteen miles of sea coast, comprising portions of the territories of Manna, Curroo and Timboo.

It is understood, in each case, that we shall extend to them our patronage and protection: that we will establish trading factories among them, furnishing them necessaries at moderate prices, in exchange for their commodities, and protect them against the incursions of their marauding neighbors.

Other tribes occupying intermediate points have agreed to transfer their territories to this government, and we are only awaiting the arrival of funds, daily expected, to perfect our negotiations. If not interrupted by foreigners, and means are placed at our command, I shall succeed in extinguishing the native title to all the land lying between the extreme points of colonial jurisdiction.

Gentlemen, I lay before you a communication, dated December 18th, 1846, addressed to me by Captain Murray, of her Majesty's Sloop Favorite, in which he asked permission to construct a chart of the line of coast occupied by the Liberians, in which to mark the territories now in their possession, and that I would attach my signature to the same, and allow him to examine the title deeds by which we held the territories in question.

He has also been pleased to say, "that England recognizes our right to these territories, if legally purchased from the rightful owners of the soil," regarding the Liberians however, "only in the light of a society or private company of traders; and in no case can she admit the exercise of sovereign rights, in which may be included the payment of custom dues. And that common international law does not allow the claim to territory which may have been only partially purchased and occupied in detached portions. And that, in the event of this government purchasing the land surrounding sites of factories in which British subjects have acquired rights of property, it will be his duty to disallow the legality of such a purchase, if made over the heads of such British subjects, and obtained without their consent."

Of course, no objections were interposed in regard to the construction of a chart. I did, however, as Captain Murray could not tell me for what purpose it was required, decline placing my signature to the chart.

The light in which England regards the sovereignty of these colonies is not new to you. Captain Murray is only reiterating what has been said by British naval officers on that subject several years ago.

We are told that England regards the Liberians only "in the light of a society or private company of traders or settlers," without any national rights or privileges. Then fellow citizens, if the principles advanced by British officers with respect to the sovereignty of Liberia be correct, after all our toil, we are still without a country or home: outcasts upon the world, hunted and persecuted in every clime.

I, however, doubt the correctness of the position assumed by British officers in regard to this subject.

The frailty of human nature, the wants of individuals, and the numerous circumstances which surround them through the course of life; have in all ages, and in every country, impelled men to form societies and establish governments.

The people of these colonies, impelled by circumstances over which they had no control, left their native land to seek on these shores a residence for civil and political freedom. At the expense of their blood, at the hazard of their lives, without the least charge to the country from which they removed: by unceasing labor, and an unconquerable spirit, they have effected settlements and established governments, with Executive, Legislative and Judicial powers, in the distant and inhospitable wilds of Africa.

After all this, will Great Britain, with all her magnanimity and philanthropy towards the African race, deny us the right to exercise these powers? I trow not. Generous minds contemplating with pleasure the increasing happiness of human society, must feel delight in beholding the increasing prosperity of these colonies.

While it is obvious that we should and will respect the prior rights of property, such as sites of factories, acquired by British subjects, within our jurisdiction, we cannot concede the point, that it is at all necessary for us to obtain the concurrence of British subjects in purchasing the lands owned by the natives, surrounding sites of factories owned by such British subjects.

In no instance to my knowledge, have such factories set up any claim to the sovereignty of the country.—On the contrary, they conform to the rules and usages of the country, as established by the natives, and in no case would they attempt to abrogate any of them.

I maintain that the natives have the same right to those lands, and their kings to the sovereignty of them, as any native or King in Europe can have to the lands or sovereignty of such respective country.—And if the kings, with the consent and concurrence of their subjects, are disposed, and will cede to this government their territories with the sovereignty of them, incorporating themselves with us, as the Texans have done with the people of the United States, I ask, what has any British subject or any other person or nation to do with it?

In our case it appears that common international law does not allow the claim to territory which may have been only partially purchased, and occupied in detached portions; but in the case of British subjects, their claim must be allowed and their rights respected: rather one sided this, and not easily reconciled.

Gentlemen, be not discouraged, Liberia is destined by the Almighty to be the free and quiet habitation of thousands, perhaps millions in future; and a land for the oppressed to flee to, and be happy. Innumerable apparent causes, and doubtless innumerable others which are unseen to us, are at work to hasten great events; and every day seems pregnant with something new and important. And may we not hope, as in time past, so in time to come, these colonies will make swifter progress in their advances to maturity than any which have heretofore existed.

Hitherto their growth has astonished their enemies, and has surpassed the sanguine predictions even of their enthusiastic friends. Their advances continue with an increasing rapidity, and according to the course of human affairs, if not retarded by foreign interference, they will soon be the subject of applause and admiration among the nations of the world; and will wipe from our race the foul imputation, "that colored men are incapable of self government."

Gentlemen, notwithstanding the many embarrassments and difficulties we have to encounter, consequent upon settling any new country, we have much to encourage us. Possessed of a continent so rich and extensive, that the enterprising genius of Europe or America has not been able to explore its boundaries, nor fathom the depths of its fertility, nor penetrate the treasures of its exhaustless mines.

Every circumstance favorable to mankind, concur to facilitate the independence and happiness of these colonies. Here the human mind, untrammelled by unequal laws, and unawed by unjust prejudices, will expand with new wings, and gathering strength with its flight, will feel its native force, and reach the summit of human perfection.

I believe that the Almighty intends through the instrumentality of those colonies to restore to Africa her long-lost glory. Here it is probable, science and virtue, will attain their highest perfection, society shine in the most beautiful and lovely form, and produce the highest felicity. As virtue alone, however, can ensure real happiness and solid glory, this must be a prevailing principle before society can attain them. The history of mankind testifies through all ages and periods, the inseparable connection between virtue and happiness; and in proportion to its prevalence has been the prosperity of every state or nation.

Such circumstances call with a peculiar importunity, not less for a disposition to unite in all those measures in which the honor, safety, and prosperity of our country depend, than for all the exertions of wisdom and firmness.

In all such measures, gentlemen, you may rely on my hearty concurrence and co-operation.

J. J. Roberts.

Government House, *Monrovia, Liberia, Jan.* 4, 1847.

THE LIBERIA PACKET.

We are happy to learn that this vessel fully meets the sanguine expectations of her owners. It will be recollected that she was launched last November, and sailed on her first voyage to Liberia within four months from the laying of her keel. She was modelled expressly with a view to speed, in which it is believed she is excelled by no vessel out of this port. Her internal arrangements were constructed especially for the comfort of passengers and emigrants, and of her perfection in this respect, and also of the ability and deportment of her Captain, the following letter, from Dr. Lugenbeel, Colonial Physician of Liberia, amply testifies. The packet certainly reflects great credit upon her architect and builder, L. B. Culley, Esq., not only by her beautiful model and finish, but for the despatch with which she was completed.

Monrovia, Liberia, *Feb.* 6th, 1847.

Dear Doctor:—Presuming that you will be pleased to receive a few lines from me, relative to my late voyage across the Atlantic, in the Liberia Packet, and my safe arrival in this goodly land, I send you, by return of the Packet, a short epistle. After my first voyage across the ocean, in 1843, I felt as if I would almost prefer spending the remainder of my life in Africa to crossing the "big water" again; but since my late delightful voyage in the Liberia Packet, I have felt as if I would almost as willingly spend a month or more on the ocean, under similar circumstances, as on any part of terra-firma. Although we had pretty rough weather during a considerable part of the time, yet we were so comfortably situated on board the vessel that we experienced very little inconvenience on that account.

I presume that your son and the captain will give you all the particulars respecting the voyage; therefore it will be unnecessary for me to furnish you with a detailed statement. As one of the passengers, however, I feel that an expression of my feelings in regard to the accommodations on board the packet and the treatment which the passengers received, is due to the company, and especially to their agent, and also to Captain Goodmanson,

whose gentlemanly deportment, kind feelings and accommodating disposition, are worthy the highest commendation, and whose careful and skilful management of the vessel, under all circumstances, merit for him the approbation of all concerned. And, in expressing my own feelings, I am convinced that I express the feelings of all my fellow-passengers. I believe that no considerate person could be dissatisfied with such accommodations as we had. I have sailed in several different vessels in crossing the ocean and in travelling up and down this coast, but I never was so comfortably and pleasantly situated on board any vessel.

The Packet sails remarkably well. Notwithstanding the southerly prevalence of the trade-wind, which prevented us from weathering the Cape Verd Islands, and which retarded our progress considerably, and the calms which we experienced, after having passed the islands, we made Cape Mount on the morning of the 6th ultimo, and anchored in the harbor of Monrovia the night of the same day—thirty-two days and a half from Cape Henry.

On my arrival in the Colony I found the state of affairs pretty much as when I left—no material change having yet taken place. The Legislature was in session, and the all-absorbing subject of sovereignty was the leading topic of legislation. I was gratified to perceive that the subject was discussed with calmness and consideration—the legislators seeming to feel its weight and importance. And the manner in which the subject has been disposed of, is highly creditable to the wisdom and judgment of those who had been selected by the people as their representatives. According to the decision of the Legislature, an election is to be held on the third Tuesday in February in all the settlements in the Commonwealth for delegates to a national convention to be held at Monrovia on the first Monday in July, for the purpose of framing a constitution, and making other necessary arrangements preparatory to a formal declaration of sovereignty. The constitution will be laid before the people as early as practicable after the convention, and the people are to decide by solemn vote, on the last Monday in September, whether the constitution presented by the convention, shall be adopted or not. In case a majority of the people shall reject the constitution, the delegates will meet again in convention and prepare another draft, or make such amendments as will suit the wishes of the people; which new draft will likewise be laid before the people for their adoption or rejection. The new government will not go into operation before the 1st of January, 1848.

I was pleased to find that considerable improvement had been made in agriculture. Although a great deal remains to be done, in the cultivation of the soil, before the people of Liberia can be really independent, yet a gradually progressive improvement, in this respect, is clearly perceptible.

Yours truly,

Dr. James Hall. J. W. Lugenbeel.

TERMS.

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